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Defense

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

23 August 1962

Mac:

I understand that the Rusk-McNamara paper entitled "Report on Implications for U.S. Foreign and Defense Policy of Recent Soviet Intelligence" will reach the President during my absence. Would you be good enough to pass in my comments, attached herewith, when the basic paper goes to the President?

MDZ
M.D.T.

Attachment

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E. O. 11652, SEC. 3(E), 5(D), 5(E) AND 11

OSD Letter (WLR-77-83)
BY 7047M NARS, DATE 8/5/77

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

23 August 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Comments on "Report on Implications for U.S.
Foreign and Defense Policy of Recent Soviet
Intelligence"

1. Although I agree with most of the subject report, I do not feel that it sets forth clearly enough the following considerations which are certain to have an important bearing on future Soviet political behavior.

a. Preponderant Soviet Military Strength in Europe

Since World War II, the Soviets have given top-priority to the maintenance of undisputed military superiority over the NATO forces in Western Europe. To this end, in recent years they have given emphasis both to conventional forces (which include relatively high yield tactical atomic weapons) and to medium range nuclear missiles sited on Soviet soil. They continue to expand this formidable MRBM array, the effective neutralization of which is beyond the present means of NATO or of the U.S. This combination of unconventional and nuclear strength in Europe has the effect of allaying the deep fear of the Russian leaders of a revanchist Germany, and of providing a potent tool for the intimidation of Western Europe, particularly when the extent of the exposure of NATO to the MRBM is fully appreciated.

b. Soviet Moves to Upset the "Balance of Terror"

Vis-a-vis the United States, the Soviet position is much less secure. Soviet leaders must appreciate their inferiority in certain aspects of the preparations for general nuclear war, particularly in numbers of strategic weapons and delivery vehicles and in early warning means. However, it is clear that they are not content to live with this inferiority and intend to correct it, if possible, tilting the scale in their favor and upsetting the present "balance of terror." Toward these ends, the Soviets are steadily increasing their offensive strength in deployed ICBM's and in missile-launching

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submarines, and are augmenting the invulnerability of the ICBM's by hardening and perhaps by concealment of launching sites. A growing appreciation of the effectiveness of U.S. reconnaissance capabilities has probably been a shock to Soviet leaders who may be expected to accelerate these programs in order to correct the weaknesses which they know that we have detected.

The attention paid by the Soviets to the defensive aspects of general war preparations is particularly notable. The effort to offset our superior bomber force by a very extensive system of SAM defenses has been going on for several years and still continues. Recent intelligence indicates the probability of deployment of an Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) which may have already begun. Whatever we may think or say about the effectiveness of this ABM, the Soviets probably feel that it will pay for its cost in giving some degree of protection to Russian cities and in gaining prestige abroad and morale at home. The Soviets probably hope by these efforts to move from the present strategic situation where the U.S. holds the balance of nuclear superiority largely through manned bombers with neither side having an acceptable missile defense, to one where the U.S. offensive strength against military targets is neutralized by an invulnerable Russian missile force on land and sea and the Soviet homeland defenses are significantly better than those of the U.S. The "balance of terror" then would be tipped in favor of the USSR.

c. Possible Trends in Soviet Political Behavior

With the declining U.S. superiority in the strategic field, it is reasonable to expect that the Soviets may increasingly press in Europe to gain local advantages without risking general war. If, beyond this, they succeed in upsetting the "balance of terror" in their favor -- particularly if they beat the U.S. to an effective ABM while the U.S. remains unprotected against missile attacks -- the potential limits of Soviet aggressiveness are greatly extended. It is not hard to visualize as a consequence a Western Europe swinging to neutralism as the precariousness of the situation becomes clear.

d. Adequacy of U.S. Programs

Events do not need to turn out as forecast above if the U.S. and NATO will otherwise. It is possible to offset Soviet strength in Europe by increased NATO conventional forces supported by improved tactical nuclear weapons and by a quick-reaction medium range missile capable of neutralizing or at least threatening the Soviet MRBM's. To insure continuation of comparative stability in

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the "balance of terror," the U.S. must take a decision without delay with regard to the deployment of NIKE-ZEUS and accept the need to give a higher priority to the requirements of continental air defense in the formulation of the FY 1964 budget. I feel that these points need to come out clearly in the subject report.

Maxwell D. Taylor
MAXWELL D. TAYLOR